



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2010-180

TO: School District Superintendents
Special Education Directors
Principals

FROM: Michael Harris, Supervisor Monitoring and Accountability
Special Programs Division

DATE: October 15, 2010

SUBJECT: Information regarding the OSEP Verification Visit

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

During the week of September 27th, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) Special Programs Division received a verification visit from the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Each year, OSEP selects a number of states for on-site visits based on the length of time since the prior visit (Wyoming last received a visit in 2003). In conducting verification visits, OSEP's purpose is to ensure the accuracy of information reported in the State's Annual Performance Report (APR) and to ensure that the State is meeting all federal requirements in three key areas of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): 1) the State's system of general supervision, 2) data systems, and 3) fiscal systems.

The WDE expects to receive OSEP's final report in early 2011; however, the State would like to take this opportunity to share several details regarding the verification visit. Although the visit was extremely positive and affirmed the vast majority of policies, procedures, and practices within the State's systems, OSEP clearly outlined areas in which changes will be required.

Among the positive comments, OSEP praised the State's sophisticated data system (including the many ways the WDE uses data internally and in its work with local education agencies); the technical assistance and enforcement structure of the state's general supervision system; and, the utility of the monitoring system in furthering the purpose of IDEA, which is to improve educational outcomes and functional results for students with disabilities.

As with any monitoring event, the WDE expects to be required to take corrective action in some areas. WDE plans to make several minor adjustments to its procedures related to the identification and correction of noncompliance. These corrections will be made in

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the coming weeks and stakeholders will be apprised of specific details through the WDE's issuance of guidance memos and revised procedures.

The WDE does anticipate a major finding against the State regarding its failure to demonstrate adequate general supervision authority across the full age range of Part B. Specifically, OSEP was concerned about the WDE's inability to ensure that students ages 3 through 5 are being provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. Correction of this finding is expected to require the dedication of additional WDE general supervision resources toward preschool special education programs.

Please contact Barb Yates at byates1@educ.state.wy.us or 307-857-9253, if you have any questions.

MH/by